



City of Santa Barbara
Parks and Recreation Department

Memorandum

DATE: May 16, 2012

TO: Creeks Restoration/Water Quality Improvement Program
Citizen Advisory Committee

FROM: Liz Smith, Creeks Outreach Coordinator

SUBJECT: **Education and Outreach Program Update**

COMMITTEE DIRECTION – FOR DISCUSSION

That the Committee receive an update on the Creeks Division's education and outreach program.

BACKGROUND

The overall objectives of the Creeks Division education and outreach programs are to increase awareness of the causes of and actions to prevent water pollution, foster community stewardship of our local creeks, watershed, and ocean, and communicate the efforts of the Creeks Division to the residents of Santa Barbara.

Outreach efforts are guided by the Creeks Division's Public Education Plan, as well as the City's Storm Water Management Program (SWMP), which outlines measurable goals that must be met each year, including youth education, event participation, and media campaigns.

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of outreach efforts, the Creeks Division has conducted two Public Opinion Surveys, in 2002 and 2008. Another survey will likely be conducted in 2013 to gauge the community's awareness of water quality issues, and willingness to change behaviors in order to protect local creek and ocean water quality.

YOUTH WATERSHED EDUCATION

Creek Kids Series and Watershed Resource Center Field Trips

The Creeks Division contracts with Art From Scrap's Green Schools Program to provide youth watershed education to students in kindergarten through twelfth grade in the City of Santa Barbara. The Creek Kids series consists of two in-class presentations, a field trip to a local creek, and a visit to the Watershed Resource Center (WRC) at Arroyo Burro Beach, where students participate in a beach clean-up. The students learn about

watersheds, creeks, marine debris, sources of water pollution, and what they can do to help improve local water quality. In Fiscal Year 2011, over 3,300 students participated in the Creek Kids series and/or field trips to the WRC.

Youth CineMedia

Since 2007, the Creeks Division has worked with Youth CineMedia, a nationally recognized program that teaches at-risk teens the fundamentals of digital filmmaking, music production, photojournalism, and graphic design. With approximately 100 participants each year, Youth CineMedia has produced various English and Spanish print and bus advertisements, video public service announcements, short films, and outreach materials for the Creeks Division.

Parks & Recreation Programs

This summer staff will continue to collaborate with the Parks and Recreation Department to provide creek and water quality related presentations to campers at Nature Camp. The Creeks Division has also worked with the City's Recreation Afterschool Program (RAP) and Afterschool Opportunities for Kids Program (A-OK!).

MERITO

The Creeks Division partners with the MERITO (Multicultural Education for Resource Issues Threatening Oceans) program of the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary each year to lead elementary school students in water quality testing and creek restoration projects. In January, 30 students from Franklin Elementary School visited Sycamore Creek, where they tested water quality and planted 35 native plants.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Community events provide great opportunities to talk to community members one-on-one, and are an important component of the Creeks Division's outreach efforts. In addition to events that are hosted by the Creeks Division, staff provides information at the Earth Day Festival, the Harbor & Seafood Festival, and many other events each year. Various informational brochures, flyers, activity books, and water quality enforcement magnets are distributed at each event, and new posters and display materials are produced for particular programs and projects as needed. At each event, visitors are invited to take a "Clean Creeks Pledge" and make a personal commitment to adopt behaviors that will help protect local water quality.

Creek Week

The Creeks Division partners with County of Santa Barbara, the City of Goleta, the City of Carpinteria, and UCSB each year to organize Creek Week, a full week of events celebrating our local creeks and watersheds. During the 2011 event, over 1,400 community members participated in 27 events hosted by various local groups and organizations. This year will mark the 13th annual Creek Week, which will again kick off with Coastal Cleanup Day on September 15th, 2012. Interested community members and organizations are welcome to visit www.sbcreekweek.com to get involved.

Community Forum

Each year, the Creeks Division hosts a community water quality forum in order to educate the public about a particular issue or project. The forum is televised in both English and Spanish on City TV, and archived online at www.sbcreeks.com. In 2011, the forum featured a presentation on the “Search for Water” in Santa Barbara by local historian Neal Graffy. The presentation included stories and photos of early Santa Barbara residents, and explored their reliance on and relationship with our local creeks.

Volunteer Events

The Creeks Division works with various local schools and organizations to plan volunteer creek and beach clean-ups, native planting days, and field trips. Horny Toad Activewear has been a longtime community partner, cleaning West Beach near their office on a regular basis, participating in storm drain marking events, and helping to remove invasive plants and install native plants at various locations. Additional volunteer groups over the past year have included Americorps, sailors visiting on the USS Milius, and several Santa Barbara City College students.

Looking Good Santa Barbara

Since 2009, the Creeks Division has participated in the Environmental Services Division’s Looking Good Santa Barbara Eastside community clean-up. This year’s event is scheduled for Saturday, June 2nd, and will include a creek clean-up of Old Mission Creek at Bohnett Park, and storm drain marking in the neighborhood surrounding Ortega Park. Interested community members can learn more by visiting www.LookingGoodSB.com.

Adopt-a-Beach

The Creeks Division administers the California Coastal Commission’s Adopt-a-Beach Program in the City of Santa Barbara. Recent beach adoption groups include Santa Barbara Channelkeeper, Santa Barbara Urban Creeks Council, the Chumash Maritime Association, the Santa Barbara Hyatt, and Brooks Institute. In 2011, over 1,000 pounds of trash and debris was removed from our local beaches by these organizations, who contributed 310 volunteer hours throughout the year.

TRADITIONAL MEDIA

Television Public Service Announcements

In 2010, the Creeks Division worked with City TV to produce a series of television public service announcements with the message “The Ocean Begins on Your Street.” The PSAs feature beach activities taking place at the storm drain inlet, and are intended to help viewers make the connection between the storm drain system and the ocean. The “Favorite Surf Spot” PSA, starring Creeks Supervisor George Johnson, was awarded a Regional Emmy Award in 2011. English and Spanish-language PSAs are run each year on local Cox Media television stations and Univision, reaching an estimated 158,000 viewers each month.

Next month the Creeks Division will again work with City TV to produce a new series of PSAs with the message “Don’t Let Trash Ruin Your Scene,” featuring recreated iconic

movie scenes that are ruined by pollution. In the coming year, staff will continue to work with Cox Media, Univision, KEYT, and KSBY to broadcast PSAs.

Radio Public Service Announcements

The Creeks Division works with local Rincon Broadcasting stations and KDB to produce and air radio PSAs each year, reaching an estimated 54,600 listeners per month. The PSAs are run on both English and Spanish-language stations, and relate back to the television PSAs with the message “The Ocean Begins on Your Street.”

Print Advertising

Throughout the year, the Creeks Division runs print advertisements in the *Independent* featuring images from “The Ocean Begins on Your Street” television campaign. The ads include tips related to everyday activities that can contribute to poor water quality. Ads promoting Certified Clean Water Businesses are run in the *Independent* and *Food & Home Magazine*. The full Creek Week schedule and associated ads are run in the *Independent*, the *Santa Barbara Daily Sound*, and *CASA Magazine* each year. A Spanish-language ad designed by Youth CineMedia is run in *SB Latino* (formerly *El Mexicano*), a bi-weekly newspaper published by the *Santa Barbara News-Press*. Public meeting notices and other event promotions are printed in various local publications as needed.

MTD Bus Advertising

The Creeks Division runs advertisements on the interiors and exteriors of Metropolitan Transit District buses each year, in a partnership with the County of Santa Barbara Project Clean Water and the City of Goleta. Currently the interior bus ads feature images from “The Ocean Begins on Your Street” campaign. Ads installed on the exteriors of the buses last summer incorporated a mural created by Adams Elementary School students with an image of a healthy compared to an unhealthy watershed, illustrating the concept that everyone in the community can have an effect on local water quality.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND INTERNET-BASED OUTREACH

SBCreeks.com

The Creeks Division’s website, www.sbcreeks.com, received nearly 6,400 visits during Fiscal Year 2011. Information on various projects and programs is provided online, as well as Creeks Advisory Committee meeting notices and videos, a video library of PSAs and programs, a full list of Certified Clean Creeks Businesses, and much more. Reports and studies produced by and for the Creeks Division are posted, and a page is dedicated to science project ideas and resources for students. In 2009, the Creeks Division also purchased the domain www.sbcreekweek.com to provide a central location for the community to find information about Creek Week activities.

Email Newsletter

Each month, the Creeks Division sends an email newsletter to over 600 subscribers. The “e-News” includes project and program updates, Clean Water Business announcements, and information on upcoming events and volunteer opportunities.

Interested community members can sign up for the newsletter and view past issues at www.sbcreeks.com.

Internet Advertising

The Creeks Division has done a limited amount of online advertising over the past few years. In 2010, a Creek Week banner ad was run on www.noozhawk.com the weeks prior to and during the event. In 2011 a banner ad featuring an image from "The Ocean Begins on Your Street" PSA was run on www.independent.com. Currently there is a Spanish-language ad placed on www.kpmr.com, and staff is considering ways to continue branching out into internet advertising.

Facebook

In January 2011, the Creeks Division created a Facebook page in order to reach community members on a more direct level. Posts to the page have included links to e-News issues, Clean Creeks Certified Business announcements, sharing of water quality or creek restoration related news articles, and promotion of community events and volunteer opportunities. In the future, staff intends to expand use of the page to include short surveys, calls to action, contests, and more personal interaction with the community. At the time of this report, the page has 61 "Likes" and 32 organizations who have added the Creeks Division as a "Favorite" on their respective pages. Anyone is welcome to view the page and follow the Creeks Division at www.facebook.com/SBCreeks.

PROJECT AND PROGRAM OUTREACH

Clean Water Business Program

Since 2007, the Creeks Division has certified 123 local businesses who have committed to making an everyday effort to keep our creeks and ocean clean. Certified Clean Creeks Businesses are promoted online at www.sbcreeks.com, in the monthly e-News, as well as in print ads in the *Independent* and *Food & Home Magazine*, and now on the Creeks Division's Facebook page. Once a business is inspected and certified by staff, they receive a certificate signed by the Mayor and the Creeks Division Manager, and a decal to place in their window identifying them as a certified business. The program is promoted through postcard mailings, a quarterly automotive newsletter, direct contact with targeted business segments, enforcement actions, and at community events. The program is currently open to restaurants, automotive businesses, and mobile washers, with tentative plans to expand to retail businesses in the coming year.

Creek Tree Program

The Creek Tree Program is designed to improve riparian canopy throughout the City by installing native trees on creek side private properties. Outreach efforts for the program began in 2008 with direct mailings of information and follow-up telephone calls about the program to property owners. In 2011 a Creeks Division intern went door to door to speak to creek side homeowners about the program, which has proven to be the most successful method of outreach to the community.

Capital Project Outreach and Interpretive Signage

With the installation of large scale capital projects come many community meetings, project tours, and presentations. In the early design phase, the Creeks Division provides presentations to various stakeholder groups, and holds public meetings to seek community input; project tours are often provided during and after construction for the community. Upon completion of capital projects, the Creeks Division often installs interpretive signage to inform the public of what was done, and why.

Creek Signs

In 2004, the Creeks Division began installing creek signs on pedestrian and vehicle bridges throughout the City. The signs include illustrations of a steelhead (Mission Creek), a heron (Arroyo Burro), and a sycamore leaf (Sycamore Creek), and a message indicating that the creeks flow to the ocean. By making community members aware of the creeks as they walk or drive over them, staff hopes to foster a sense of value, connection, and stewardship toward the creeks.

Storm Drain Markers

Storm drain markers are found on storm drain inlets throughout the City, serving as a visual reminder to the community that storm drains flow directly to our creeks and the ocean. The decals feature a dolphin and fish, with a “No Dumping” message in both English and Spanish. The markers also provide an opportunity for volunteer efforts, with organizations like the Boy Scouts and Horny Toad Activewear participating in storm drain marking events.

cc: Cameron Benson, Creeks Division Manager
Jill E. Zachary, Assistant Parks and Recreation Director